

For Immediate Release

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TNSTEP's Dr. Susan Speraw Receives International Award for Nursing Excellence

Greeneville, Tenn. (Dec. 2, 2021)—Susan Speraw, PhD, RN has been named recipient of the 2021 **Daniel J. Pesut Spirit of Renewal Award** by Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing (Sigma), the second-largest nursing organization in the world.

Speraw was among a group of thirty-eight medical professionals, campaigns, and groups recognized by Sigma in Indianapolis on Nov. 5, a list that also includes *Dr. Anthony Fauci*, the *Nursing Now Global Campaign*, and other top research and healthcare leaders from around the globe.

The prestigious award is given to a nurse leader whose purposeful reflection in practice and mindful understanding of human relationships displays a futuristic vision for nursing practice. Speraw credits her faith, Polish-American upbringing, and lifelong calling to serve the underserved as the motivation behind her work in healthcare and in life.



“Nursing has been a treasure and a gift; it is an identity. It has allowed me to witness new life, and to offer solace as life ends. It has offered me freedom to collaborate across disciplines to marshal resources to meet people and address the needs in their community. It has allowed me to raise my voice in advocacy and teach and mentor a new generation of health professionals who will carry the legacy of caring forward. Nursing practice brings its own rewards. Nonetheless, I am deeply honored to have my life’s work recognized in this way, and hope that through this recognition, others might also be inspired to care and innovate, and teach and mentor,” the award recipient stated.

Speraw obtained nursing degrees at *University of California, Los Angeles (MN)* and *California State University (BS)*, and began her career in pediatric and maternity nursing. Following a serious injury that permanently threatened her mobility, Speraw pursued her PhD in clinical psychology (*California School of Professional Psychology/ Alliant University*) to continue her passion for serving others through practice and educating future nurses, psychologists and physicians.

The Tennessee-based honoree has held notable positions in nursing, research and education at institutions such as *California State University Los Angeles, California School of Professional Psychology-Los Angeles, University of Southern California, University of Tennessee College of Medicine – Chattanooga Unit, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga*, and most recently, *University of Tennessee-Knoxville*, where she retired from teaching in 2015.

Speraw came out of retirement in 2020 to provide private counseling due to the immense need created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to her work in clinical psychology, she serves on the Board of Directors for TNSTEP, a non-profit that supports families and caregivers of children and youth with disabilities across Tennessee.

“Over the twenty years I have known Susan, she has exemplified and practiced meeting the needs she sees in front of her, looking for ways to make communities stronger, and investing herself into mentoring others in their journeys. It was an honor to write a letter of support for her nomination. Congratulations, Susan! I am so thrilled your lifetime accomplishments were acknowledged with this prestigious award,” said TNSTEP’s executive director, Karen Harrison.

For more information about this award or Sigma, visit www.sigmanursing.org. For award photos or interview requests, contact TNSTEP at www.tnstep.org.

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